



**TOYOTA**

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

National Center for Families Learning - Amy Foster Parish, 703-472-5997, [aparish@familieslearning.org](mailto:aparish@familieslearning.org)

**California teacher's family engagement efforts earn national honor**

*The National Center for Families Learning and Toyota award \$25,000 to two educators for their success at engaging families in the classroom.*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**LOUISVILLE, KY (OCTOBER 25, 2023)** – Sergio de Alba of Los Banos, California has long recognized the power of family engagement to create stronger families and stronger communities. For twenty-two years, he's been committed to helping families in his rural farming community build deeper connections with their school and to creating an environment where all cultures, needs, and backgrounds are embraced. His success in this effort earned him the title of 2023 Toyota Family Teacher of the Year, a national designation that recognizes outstanding educators who are exceptional in engaging families in learning.

For 27 years, the National Center for Families Learning (NCFL) and Toyota have partnered to recognize educators from across the nation who use a strong multi-generational approach to learning and focus on building effective family-school partnerships that support student achievement and school improvement. The award announcement was made public last night during the Families Learning Conference by Mike Goss, General Manager of Social Innovation at Toyota Motor North America and President of the Toyota USA Foundation. Both Mr. de Alba and runner-up Dr. Artika Tyner of St. Paul, Minnesota, were surprised with news of their awards earlier this month. Watch video footage of de Alba's surprise [here](#).

As a child, Mr. de Alba was the son of a farm worker and an English language learner. He uses those personal experiences in his teaching and in interactions with the families and students at R.M. Miano Elementary School. He has a unique understanding of the challenges his students face and the ways that educational opportunity can transform communities like his by working with families as partners in the learning process and as integral parts of a child's educational journey.

Throughout his career, Mr. de Alba has designed a variety of family engagement learning experiences that include events like cultural potlucks and astronomy nights alongside community service projects that teach the importance of civic engagement. These service-learning projects, all aligned to state

standards, have built gardens, a baseball field, a veteran’s memorial stage, murals, and countless other monuments. He hopes to use the award to fund a new mural project and provide buses for an annual university tour for his students and families that promotes the importance of post-secondary educational opportunities.

“For nearly three decades, Toyota has partnered with NCFL to recognize and celebrate successful family engagement programs across the country,” says Goss. “Time and again we’ve seen the power of family engagement to impact student achievement and kickstart a legacy of multigenerational educational success. We are so pleased for the chance to celebrate Sergio and Artika and highlight the ways they’re making a difference for the families they serve.”

Dr. Tyner is an attorney, author, and activist and founder of Planting People Growing Justice Leadership Institute (PPGJLI) in St. Paul, Minnesota. PPGJLI works to end the school-to-prison pipeline by raising awareness of the reading crisis, supporting diverse books and authors, and promoting cultural preservation. She was inspired to create PPGJLI during her work as a civil rights attorney, where she noted that most of her clients learned how to read while incarcerated. Dr. Tyner hopes to use the award to expand her work both locally and nationally.

“Sergio and Artika are both committed to working alongside parents and children to break cycles of poverty and incarceration through educational success,” says NCFL President and CEO Dr. Felicia C. Smith. “By creating meaningful engagement opportunities and streamlining access to systems of support, these outstanding professionals are changing the course of both the families they serve and their communities. I can’t wait to see how they use this award to deepen their impact.”

As the 2023 Toyota Family Teacher of the Year winner, Mr. de Alba will receive \$20,000 to implement a family leadership program aimed at fostering authentic partnerships among families and schools in her district. As runner-up, Dr. Tyner will receive a \$5,000 grant award to support her family engagement efforts. Since 1997, Toyota Family Teacher of the Year winners, runners-up, and their respective organizations have received \$675,000 and funded 54 innovative teacher-led projects.

###

### **About the National Center for Families Learning (NCFL)**

NCFL is a national nonprofit that has worked for over 30 years to eradicate poverty through education solutions for families. We believe education is a shared responsibility and that collaboration among families, schools, and community members can lead to powerful learning experiences. NCFL’s vision is to establish coordinated and aligned family learning systems in 60 communities by 2030, built with and for families, to increase education and economic outcomes and create more equitable communities. For more information on NCFL, visit [familieslearning.org](https://familieslearning.org). To learn more about our 60x30 Vision or become a 60x30 partner, visit [familieslearning.org/60x30](https://familieslearning.org/60x30).

### **About Toyota**

Toyota (NYSE:TM) has been a part of the cultural fabric in North America for more than 65 years, and is committed to advancing sustainable, next-generation mobility through our Toyota and Lexus brands, plus our more than 1,800 dealerships.

Toyota directly employs more than 63,000 people in North America who have contributed to the design, engineering, and assembly of nearly 45 million cars and trucks at our 13 manufacturing plants. By 2025, Toyota's 14th plant in North Carolina will begin to manufacture automotive batteries for electrified vehicles. With more electrified vehicles on the road than any other automaker, Toyota currently offers 26 electrified options.

For more information about Toyota, visit [www.ToyotaNewsroom.com](http://www.ToyotaNewsroom.com).